

***Remarks***

Claims 1-4 and 9 have been rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as allegedly being unpatentable in view of U.S. patent 5,859,988 (“Ajanovic”). Claims 5-8 have been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable in view of Ajanovic and U.S. patent 6,510,529 (“Alexander”).

Applicant respectfully asserts (see below) that the rejection of claim 1 is erroneous. Consequently, claim 1 should be allowed. And since all claims in the application ultimately depend from claim 1, the application is in condition for allowance.

**Claim 1**

The rejection of claim 1 was erroneous and should be withdrawn. With respect to Fig. 3 in Ajanovic, the PTO proposes: (1) that port A interface 301 corresponds to Applicant’s system bus interface device; (2) that port B interface 302 corresponds to Applicant’s first I/O bus interface device; (3) that port C interface 303 corresponds to Applicant’s second I/O bus interface device; (4) that the outputs of data buffer 304 correspond to Applicant’s first intermediate bus; (5) that the outputs of data buffer 306 correspond to Applicant’s second intermediate bus; and (6) that arbitration and control unit 308 corresponds to Applicant’s switching device. Office Action at pp. 2-3. The rejection is therefore faulty for at least the following reasons.

First, Applicant’s claim 1 requires that “*the second intermediate bus couples the system bus interface device to the switching device . . .*” Clearly, the outputs of data buffer 306 do not couple port A interface 301 to arbitration and control unit 308.

Second, Applicant’s claim 1 requires that “*the switching device is operable to couple the second intermediate bus either to the first or to the second I/O bus interface device . . .*” The outputs of data buffer 306 are coupled only to port A interface 301 and port C interface 303. They are never coupled to port B interface 302.

**Claims 2-9**

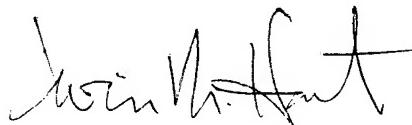
Claims 2-9 should be allowed for at least the reason that they depend from allowable claim 1. Applicant does not accede to the PTO’s characterizations of Ajanovic and Alexander with respect

to claims 2-9 and reserves the right to point out other distinctions and raise further arguments in a future paper should it become necessary or desirable to do so.

Conclusion

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicant respectfully asserts that all pending claims are in condition for allowance. Applicant earnestly solicits a notice to that effect.

Respectfully submitted,



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